

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated January 24, 2006 (the "Action"), Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above claim amendments and the following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 6-10 and 12-20 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1-5 and 11 have been canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 6, 12, 15, and 20 have been amended, leaving Claims 6-10 and 12-20 for consideration upon entry of the present amendment. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

As stated on page 5 of the Action, Claims 11-18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the subject matter of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that Claims 11-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Without conceding the propriety of the stated rejection of claim 6, and solely to expedite allowance of the application, independent base Claim 6 has been amended to recite features formerly recited in dependent Claim 11. Accordingly, Claim 11 has been canceled.

Dependent Claims 7-10 and 12-20 depend directly or indirectly from independent Claim 6 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency therefrom, as well as for the

additional features that they recite. Applicant submits that Claims 6-10 and 12-20 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-2, 6-7, and 19-20 stand rejected under § 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,771,279 to Cheston, III et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,061,439 to Bleile et al..

Claims 3-5 and 8-10 stand rejected under § 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,771,279 to Cheston, III et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,061,439 to Bleile et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,243,373 to Turock.


Applicant respectfully traverses the stated rejections. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of these rejections, Claims 1-5 and Claim 11 have been canceled without waiver, prejudice, or disclaimer of the subject matter formerly recited therein, and Claim 6 has been amended as discussed above, to expedite allowance of the application. The Applicant reserves its right to file continuing applications further to prosecute the subject matter formerly recited in Claims 1-6. For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 6-10 and 12-20 are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests an early notice of allowance. If any issues remain that would prevent the allowance of the application, Applicant requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issues.

Respectfully Submitted,

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